

MARCH, 1952

RAILWAYS

INCORPORATING

RAILWAY PICTORIAL AND LOCOMOTIVE REVIEW



ARTICLES ON :

PRIDE IN THE JOB — FAIRBOURNE LANDSLIDES — L.C. & D.R. EXPRESS
ENGINES — TALYLLYN RAILWAY — L & N.W.R. IN THE SEVENTIES

1'6



Four lone railworkers symbolise the feelings of a nation as, bare-headed, they stand to attention and watch the train conveying the body of the late King George VI as it slowly pulls out from Paddington en route to Windsor. (See "Locomotive Note," page 64.)

Fox Photos Ltd.

An Editorial Change.

THIS ISSUE IS A JOINT PRODUCTION: IT IS THE WORK of the old and the new editor. From now on 'RAILWAYS' will be in the hands of Mr. K. G. Mansell and in wishing him the very best of luck, I know that he will be guided by the experience of many years of railway journalism.

It is with much regret that I leave 'RAILWAYS' but private affairs have made my continuation with the magazine impracticable. But I should, in this, the last issue in which I shall have a share, like to thank all contributors, the production staff—and all the readers. It would be impossible to name all those who have helped with suggestions and contributions and many of the names would be familiar to readers—Messrs. O. S. Nock, W. A. Camwell, W. H. Bett, V. Stewart Haram, J. I. C. Boyd, R. C. Riley and W. Beckerlegge—to name but a few. To all of these mentioned and the many more who cannot be included in that list through lack of space—thank you! Although the future of our railway system may look dark, I can assure readers that that is not the case with 'RAILWAYS.'

PETER H. DAVISON.

THERE EXISTS, AMONGST ALL THOSE WHOSE INTEREST include the study of railway operation, history, rolling stock or what-have-you, a comradeship which it would be difficult to equal, let alone surpass. To be a member of that fraternity is satisfying; to be engaged in the publication of a journal serving its interests is even more satisfying.

In assuming the editorship of 'RAILWAYS' I am not unmindful of the high standard that has been the hallmark of this publication to date. It is my desire to maintain that standard, and to continue to give to you, the reader, the material you want. There are so many aspects of railway interest, however, that it is ever a problem to give a fair allocation to each. You can assist me by writing, as indeed the correspondence files show has been the case in the past, and giving your frank criticisms and ideas. I look forward to hearing from you and to making many new friends.

K. G. MANSELL.

READERS WILL NOTICE THAT THIS ISSUE DOES NOT contain an article by Mr. V. Stewart Haram. We very much regret that due to his wife's illness, Mr. Haram has, understandably, not been able to complete the second part of his article on the train services between London and Hastings. We sincerely trust that events will make possible the appearance of the second part in the April issue. Whilst on the subject we should mention that the date, June, 1857, which appeared on line 25, page 32, of our last issue, should read 1851.

ONCE AGAIN THE WEEK IMMEDIATELY AFTER EASTER brings the Model Railway Club Exhibition. It will be held this year, as usual, in the Central Hall, Westminster, from the 15th to the 19th of April, the dates being inclusive. Make a note to visit this Exhibition,

derelict railways; the canal terminated at a point some 400 ft. above the river, whence the "tubs" were lowered by a cable down an incline having a gradient of about 1 in 4. Everything is terribly overgrown, and forcing one's way through was not easy. The little quay alongside the river can still be traced. A short walk along the river bank, past the derelict Kilns where the famous Coalport China was produced, brought me to the station, a brick building with a single platform, beyond which the railway continued for a short distance to the engine shed. One of the oldest iron bridges in the country here crosses the river, the station on the Severn Valley line being not far from it on the other side. The river scenery here is very beautiful, and it is difficult to realise nowadays the time when the village was a busy spot where coal was loaded for river transport: its name only remains to tell of its former activities. Even the china works were transferred to Stoke-on-Trent a few decades ago. Our train, consisting of 'Fowler' 2-6-2T No. 40058 and a single bogie carriage, was at the platform, and only one passenger beside myself travelled by it to Madeley. Right away we began to climb, first at 1 in 40 and soon at 1 in 31, which must be one of the steepest passenger sections still worked over in England. Soon we left the river and ascended a narrow wooded gorge, gloriously beautiful, which extended nearly all the way to Madeley, the latter part of the incline having a gradient of 1 in 65.

The station at Madeley is curiously named "Madeley Market," probably to distinguish it from Madeley station on the main line in Staffordshire. The town, which, oddly enough, forms a part of the borough of Wenlock, though the latter town lies several miles away on the other side of the Severn, is notable as the scene of the labours of the saintly John Fletcher, the friend and helper of the Wesleys, who was vicar of the parish from 1760 until his death in 1785. Coal and ironstone deposits, extending for several miles to the northward, have been worked for more than two centuries, and the district is largely industrial, though nowadays many of the coalpits have been worked out. Hence the remainder of the journey is through country largely dominated by the refuse-heaps from disused mines, though in places the scenery, with the wreckin a few miles to the westward, is not unattractive. Soon after leaving Madeley we crossed the branch of the former G.W.R., a line opened as long ago as 1854, and connecting the northern main line near Shifnal with Coalbrookdale and the Severn Valley branch; at one time it carried a rather scanty passenger service, I noticed as we passed the former station for Madeley, known as "Madeley Court." Passing Dawley we soon reached Malinslee, within sight of the large Hollinswood sidings and ironworks, where the Lilleshall Company's traffic is handed over to the Western Region. Malinslee station is cursed with one of those very low platforms once so characteristic of the old "North Western," and a set of wheeled steps are in use to assist elderly or infirm passengers to alight or entrain. Hadley, two stations further on, is even worse, the line there being curved through the station.

Soon the ex-G.W. main line approached, diving beneath us into Oakingates tunnel: a little further on we made a junction with the private line of the Lilleshall Company and in a few hundred yards reached Oakin-

gates, where I alighted. Hereabouts the traces of worked-out coalpits abound, and onward to Hadley is a busy industrial area. Before that station the line from Stratford is joined, and the trains proceed to a double-line bay at the eastern end of Wellington station.

The branch was opened on 10th June, 1861, and G. P. Neede tells in his "Reminiscences" how one of his first jobs after joining the L. & N.W.R. was to go over the line and arrange for its opening. It might be interesting to mention that old 0-6-0ST engine that worked the line in 1889 had no protection whatever for the crew: at a later date these engines were fitted with cabs. At the time of my visit I noticed only one sign of the transfer of management—the printing of the tickets is now of Great Western type.

Talylllyn Report.

A Review of the Year 1951.

By J. I. C. BOYD.

THOSE OF US WHO HAVE BEEN INTIMATELY ACQUAINTED with the position of the Talylllyn Railway for the last ten years had known for a considerable period that it was only a question of time before the Company would be compelled to terminate its railway services. During the war the position was aggravated when the tourist traffic dwindled and when finally the Bryn Eglwys slate quarries closed the basic traffic of the line was lost. Lack of maintenance, the condition of the engine *Talylllyn* and a deficit on each year's working stretching back at least thirty years (the extent of my records) was a continuous drain on the private finances of the principle shareholder, Sir Henry Hadyn Jones (former M.P. for Merioneth). Sir Henry, sticking to his declared intention, continued to work the railway until his death at an advanced age in July, 1950, and the Management thereafter decided to close the line at the end of the 1950 season.

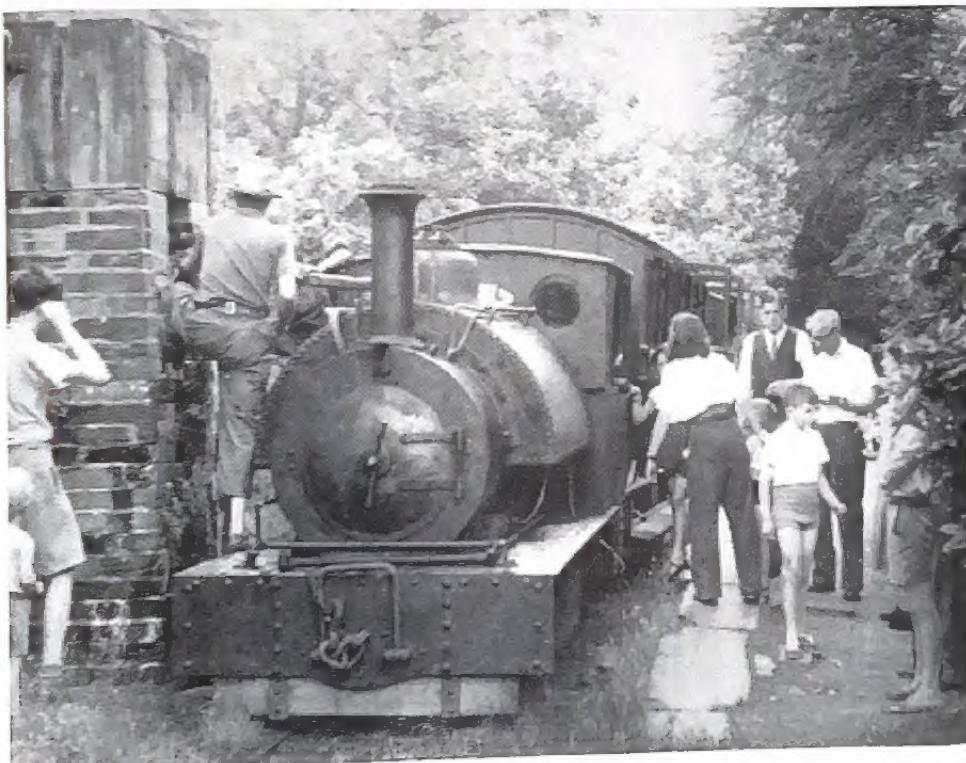
We have all of us come to regard the closing of minor railways as almost inevitable, but fortunately a straw was floating by to which the drowning Talylllyn was able to clutch. Certain persons had been actively campaigning behind the scenes and as a result a meeting was held in Birmingham in Autumn, 1950, to ascertain the possibility of taking over the railway (a somewhat complex business in the case of a Company empowered by Parliamentary Act) for, despite the waterlogged finances of the Company, the 1950 season had shown that it might be possible to operate the line on a commercial basis, providing that additional capital could be raised. The generosity of the surviving shareholders solved the next issue when the holdings of the Company were donated and taken up afresh, and the Talylllyn Railway Preservation Society, formed at the Birmingham meeting to subsidise the Railway Company, was informed that

it might launch its scheme. A new Holdings Company was formed into which the shares of the Talyllyn Railway were placed, the new Company being registered as a non-profit making concern, thus enabling it to plough back profits into fresh endeavours, and avoid taxation. At the same time, certain members of the T.R.P.S. were appointed to the Board of the T.R. Company, which Board is thus made up of former Talyllyn Company Directors and Directors nominated by the T.R.P.S. So much for the financial situation.

From a practical standpoint the position was not nearly so satisfactory. The railway had received minimum maintenance for many years and both track and rolling stock had been "taking it out of each other" for far too long. One locomotive was useless and considerable lengths of track were in a parlous state. The Committee of the T.R.P.S., meeting regularly in Birmingham, decided that the confidence expressed in it by the action of the shareholders, and the interest displayed by the people of Towyn, was worthy of their best efforts, and the task of beginning practical repairs was begun at Easter, working being almost impossible before this time owing to the wretched weather of the spring which had resulted in waterlogged stretches of line and sodden cuttings. All bad rails were earmarked with red paint and replaced by rails taken from the former village incline at Abengwynlyn, which was stripped by volunteer gangs. Ends of rails which had dropped badly at the joints (the original track has no fishplates) were temporarily lifted and a sleeper put under the joint. The track between the stations at Towyn was completely repaired for the season, with the knowledge that complete replacement would be due very shortly. Complete replacement was,

in fact, taken in hand near Rhyd-yr-Onen, using materials on hand which had been purchased from the Glyn Valley Tramway in 1936. G.V.T. materials were, in fact, the only serviceable trackage along the route, as the T.R. track has practically all worn badly at the rail head, is down at joints, and in some parts out of gauge and without sleepers. As the season progressed, T.R.P.S. funds were coming in (from Members' and Life Subscriptions) and much former Corris Railway track material was purchased and laid in. It should be emphasised that owing to differing rail section (T.R., G.V.T., and Corris materials are not interchangeable), this has obliged us to relay in complete stretches of one type of track. Random repairs are impossible, save where suitable spares are to hand. During the season work was more confined to very bad lengths of line near Brynglas and complete relaying has taken place. Our near neighbour down the coast, The Fairbourne Miniature Railway has assisted us by lending tools, labour and materials whenever necessity arose, and though a difficult force to organise, volunteer labour at week-ends has worked with a will. The track is, and will be for years to come, the Company's first consideration.

And now we must turn to rolling stock, locomotives especially. *Talyllyn* was written off, and repairs were taken in hand to *Dolgoch* at once, much good work being put in with a limited amount of equipment on hand, much of which had had to be sorted out from the desolation in which we found the workshops. Those who have seen *Dolgoch* in her present condition, and know that she worked the season unaided, need have no fear that this work was not done well. The Committee was also engaged with the matter of purchasing the



The Falcon at Dolgoch on her trial run on 21st July, 1951.
Photo by J. B. Snell.

Corris locomotives and rolling stock which still lay in the open at Machynlleth, and after a visit to Swindon matters were arranged, the engines being delivered before Easter, 'Pryce's Van' (the old Corris brake) and the wagons following later. Some of these were donations from members of the Committee, and others from members who sent special donations for this purpose. After *Dolgoch* was repaired, ex Corris No. 3 was stripped and treated similarly, having her first trials during late July when she proved a most capable and economical engine, though unsafe to use whilst the rail gauge is so much at variance. The wheels on this engine have somewhat narrow treads. Ex-Corris No. 4 was partially stripped down at the end of the season and requires some ticklish repair to the firebox and boiler. When this work is complete, it is probably that No. 4 will carry the brunt of traffic, No. 3 will be used alongside her, thus giving the ancient *Dolgoch* a rest for the time being. Both boiler and motion report on *Talylllyn* are so unsatisfactory that no work is contemplated for the time being and the engine will remain in store until finances are sufficiently strong, and trackwork sufficiently improved to raise the subject again.

There are many details which a short review such as this must overlook. New livery and crests on engines,

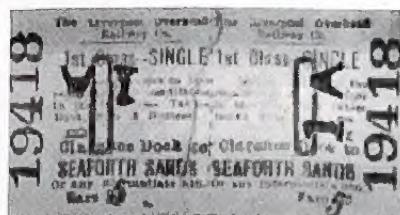
ample evidence of publicity, station painting, advertisement displays, and so on. Evidence of need is also apparent; new coaching stock, a motorised gangers' trolley, the provision of a run round loop at Dolgoch station, refreshment facilities—all these desirable objects are amongst the leading points for examination by the Committee. There are many other things known by the operating staff but unknown by those who merely come to travel and who have gone away without the least idea of the difficulties which have beset the season.

Fortunately the Committee is reasonably strong. Opinions differ, as they should. Mistakes have been made on track-relaying which was expected. The *Talylllyn* has its own peculiar weaknesses and problems, and only experience will meet them. We still look for a greater number of members, members whose subscriptions will appear in tangible form by way of new rails, fresh sleepers, steam coal and other simple but satisfactory physical day-to-day needs of a railway operating not only because of commercial necessity, but because our aim is to make the *Talylllyn* an object of pleasure, achievement and historic worth. Our hope in 1952 is that we can count the job worth-while by reason of the many new supporters to which this ambitious effort must appeal.

This Month's Ticket Spotlight.

By W. H. BETT.

Railway: Liverpool Overhead.
Journey: Clarence Dock to Seaforth Sands.
Class: 2 x 1st Class Single.
Date: 25th August, 1931.
Type of Ticket: Edmondson card, two to view.
Colour: White with yellow band across R-hand end.



THE LIVERPOOL OVERHEAD RAILWAY, BRITAIN'S ONLY true "elevated," has many unique features, and to-day is one of the very few privately-owned standard-gauge passenger lines. Owing perhaps to the limited storage space in the small booking offices at Overhead stations, the L.O.R. has long used a system for local single tickets which elsewhere has only appeared spasmodically as a war-time economy, namely the printing of two complete tickets side by side on an ordinary-sized card. Both bear the same number but are identified by serial letters "A" and "B", and can in any case be distinguished as occupying the left- or right-hand ends of the card.

The L.O.R. ticket colour scheme, though since much simplified, was in this era somewhat complicated, some features, indeed, being rather difficult to explain. This type of first class single always had a yellow band (somewhat faded in this specimen) along the right-hand end for "down" journeys (northbound) and down the centre for "up" journeys, the peculiar feature being that as this "down" indication only appeared on one ticket of the pair, it cannot have been of much practical use.

A black overprinted skeleton figure "1" may be noticed

on each coupon. This does not refer to the class, but identifies the destination station; a useful feature to aid collectors. In more recent issues it appears in solid red (and the tickets have also, through a change of printer, lost their rather unusual five-figure serial numbers); but these destination numbers have always appeared in some form on L.O.R. local tickets since very early times. They run from north to south, Seaforth Sands being 1 and Dingle 17, but the intermediate numbers have undergone some adjustments owing to opening and closing of stations. A punch-mark "1A" may be noted on each ticket; this is a cancellation punch and the punches bear the same numbers as the overprints, according to the station to which they belong. "1A" was Gladstone Dock, a new station recently opened at this time, and it had to be numbered thus as it was between the existing No. 1 (Seaforth Sands) and No. 2 (Alexandra Dock). The original No. 3, however, intermediate between Alexandra and Brocklebank, was closed and a later adjustment of the numbers, by renumbering Alexandra 3 instead of 2, enabled Gladstone to take the number 2, thus eliminating the awkward "1A" and closing up of the series.